

'Suburban' Chester Co. Dairy Hosts Holstein Field Day



Sam Matthews, front left, points out robotic milker operation to field day guests, including Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Dennis Wolff, rear.



Jason Hostetter, 9, won this calf at the field day raffle. Roy Bender of the Chester County Holstein Club presents the animal, provided by Betsy Brown. Sponsors included Cargill and Purina.



Holstein judging winners, in rear, Marilyn Umble, high score and women's winner, and Paul Berdell and Tom Matthews, tied for first place in the men's division. Kelly King and Rachel Lusby tied for first in the youth division. Photo by Dave Lefever

DAVE LEFEVER
Lancaster Farming Staff

CHESTER SPRINGS (Chester Co.) — Visitors to the Chester County Holstein Field Day this week had the chance to view a unique and thriving dairy operation in a highly-populated area.

"We're a small farm in suburbia trying to figure out how to survive," said Carolyn Matthews Eaglehouse, daughter of Sam and Melba Matthews, Milky Way owners.

Within the last couple of years, the family has made some major adaptations to help meet the demands of farming in the 21st century.

In 2001, they started Chester Springs Creamery for selling ice cream off the farm. Last year, they installed a robotic milker for the herd of 35 registered milking Holsteins.

Sam Matthews said he is pleased with the labor-saving robotic setup after one year of operation.

"It's the best hired man or woman you can get in this area," he said.

The frequent milkings allowed by the robot have also boosted milk production, he noted.

About 5 percent of the milk produced on the farm goes toward making the ice cream sold in the creamery. This milk is processed elsewhere and cream then returned the farm.

Milky Way Farm is a neighbor-friendly operation, allowing frequent opportunities for the public to come on the farm. Beside those buying ice cream at the creamery, about 13,000 people pick their own pumpkins on the farm in October, and 4,000 school kids come for tours throughout the school year.

The field day drew about 170 guests, including Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Dennis Wolff, who updated the group on his work in Harrisburg for the dairy industry.

Highlights included a calf raffle and a Holstein judging contest.

Jason Hostetter of Oxford won the July-born raffle calf provided by Betsy Brown and sponsored by Cargill and Purina.

Hostetter, 9, said he plans to raise the calf on his home farm, where he and his family keep other calves as well.

Marilyn Umble of Atglen had the high score in the judging contest. Second and third places in the women's division went to Heather Herr and Holly Sollenberger, respectively.

In the youth division, Kelly King and Rachel Lusby tied for first place, with Scott Umble and Daryl Stoltzfus placing second and third.

Tom Matthews and Paul Berdell tied for first in the men's division, followed by Ken Umble.

Lancaster Farming plans to feature Milky Way Farm and Chester Springs Creamery in its next edition of *Dairy Plus*, scheduled for Sept. 20.

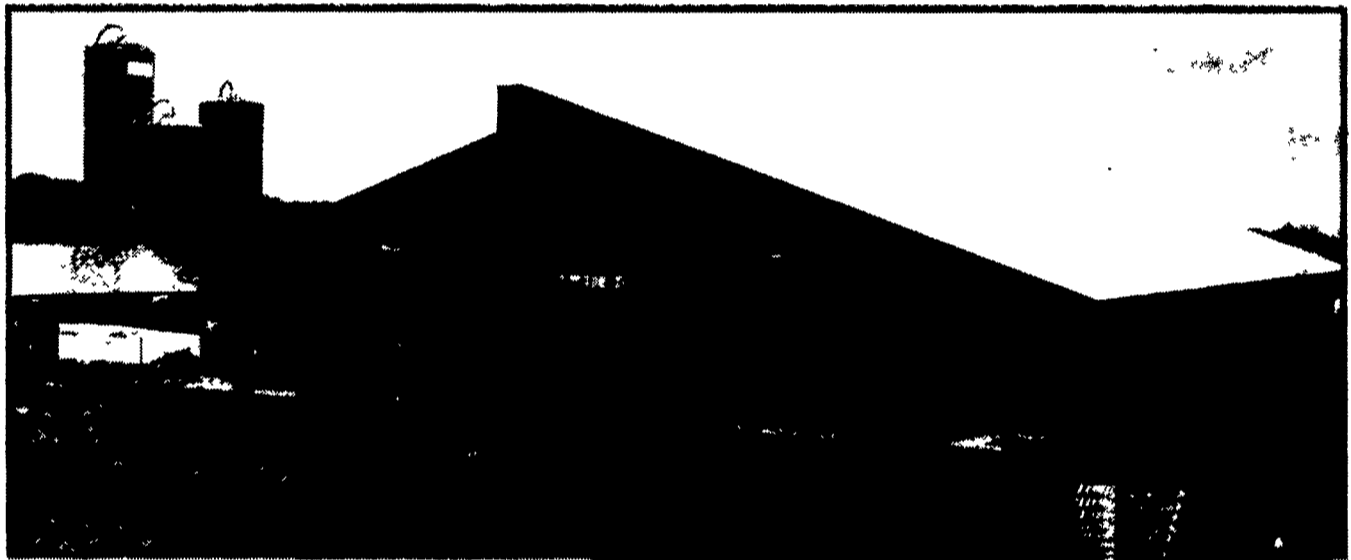
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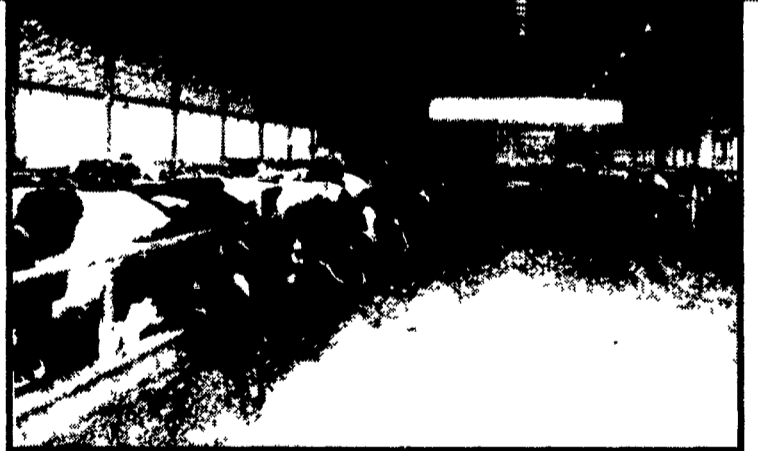
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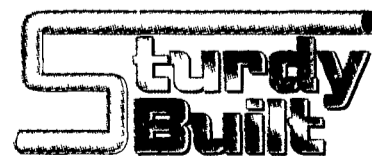
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A focus on the latest forage varieties will be part of the Sept. 13 issue of *Foraging Around*. Also scheduled: update on pastured poultry research at Penn State and the latest haymaking and grazing information from various field days.



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